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## ALLIED GUARANTEE OF ELECTIONS: WAY OUT OF FRENCH IMPASSE?

THE Battle of France, in which the Germans are experiencing the full weight of Allied power on land, sea and in the air, has a political counterpart in the controversy now raging about the future government of France. It would be a sad paradox if, at the moment when the prospect of crushing Nazism appears at last within reach, the United Nations should succumb to the very kind of dissension among themselves which made Hitler's initial triumphs possible.

**FRENCH, TOO, PAY FOR VICTORY.** At the risk of repetition, it may be useful to recapitulate some of the points that are causing most friction between the United States and the French Committee of National Liberation in Algiers. The Allied High Command selected France as the first of the conquered countries through which to strike at Nazi Germany. This decision, presumably, was dictated not by sentiment, but by purely strategic considerations. The fact that the first battle for Western Europe is being fought on French soil means that the French people are suffering loss of life and property, not only at the hands of the Germans but, most tragically, at the hands of their allies and liberators. The predicament in which we are thus placed was part of Hitler's design for defense of his "new order." Thinking Frenchmen realize that there is no other way of liberating France than by transforming it once more into a battlefield. At the same time, Americans should not expect abject gratitude from the French. True, we too are losing lives and property in France. Yet if a debt of gratitude exists between the two countries, it is surely a self-liquidating debt. For if it had not been for the resistance of the conquered peoples under conditions of suffering and terror most of us cannot even imagine, neither Russia, nor Britain, nor the United States would have much chance today of breaching Hitler's "fortress of Europe."

**WHOM WILL FRANCE CHOOSE?** General de Gaulle believes and claims that the resistance movement in France supports the French Committee of National Liberation which he heads, and wants Britain, the United States and Russia to recognize his Committee as the provisional government of France until such time as the French people have had an opportunity to express their choice in free elections. He apparently hoped that such recognition would be accorded not later than D day, and his disappointment at Washington's refusal to alter its policy explains his derogatory remarks of June 10 concerning Allied preparations for the civilian administration of France during the period of hostilities. These remarks, in turn, unquestionably hardened Washington in its determination to proceed with the course it had previously mapped out.

Washington's non-recognition of de Gaulle, however, does not solve the problem of our relations with France. The chief issue, as indicated before,\* is that President Roosevelt is convinced the French anti-Nazis are by no means overwhelmingly in favor of de Gaulle, and prefers to leave the choice of a government to the untrammeled decision of the French people. So far as can be determined, the President's views, which are opposed by many organs of opinion in Britain and the United States, have won the acquiescence of Prime Minister Churchill, but not of Foreign Secretary Eden. The practical difficulty presented by Washington's policy—and one emphasized by de Gaullists—is that a considerable period of time may elapse before elections can be held in France. Although de Gaulle has promised woman's suffrage, voting is still restricted to men, and at the present time nearly two million Frenchmen are prisoners of war in Germany, and probably two million more are working there at

\*See "French Political Issues Unresolved as Allied Armies Advance," *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, June 16, 1944.

forced labor. Until these men have been repatriated, and have had an opportunity to vote, some interim regime must be entrusted with authority if France is not to fall prey to chaos, or be placed under the administration of an allied governing commission.

The President, Secretary of State Hull, and General Eisenhower have indicated, in a series of statements, that they are ready to have representatives of the French Committee of National Liberation assist the Allies in the re-establishment of civilian administration, but have not recognized the Committee as the exclusive source of authority. This partial concession is not acceptable to General de Gaulle. What other elements may the Allies find to work with as they proceed into France? Washington may hope to reconstitute what it would regard as legitimate authority by restoring to power President Lebrun, who has not left France, and certain prominent political leaders such as Edouard Herriot, whose death has been alternately reported and denied. But in any such regime General de Gaulle and his supporters (some of whom previously either held office in France or have been members of Parliament) would doubtless play a part. Leaving aside any sentimental or legal considerations, it would seem expedient not to alienate irretrievably the French Committee.

On the other hand, in fairness to the United States, it should be said that the French, as so often in the past, are by no means in agreement among themselves (so far as can be judged by those living in exile) concerning the regime they want to see established following liberation. It is also regrettable that some extremist newspapers in Algiers, in the heat of conflict, have attributed Washington's non-recognition policy to imperialistic motives. It is conceivable that, once an international organization has been created, it might be thought desirable to internationalize certain strategic key points all over the globe, among them Dakar. But there is no indication that this country has any desire either to acquire, or exercise influence over, any of the French colonies.

One point, however, must be mentioned in this connection. France, obviously, was not prepared in 1939 to defend either its empire overseas or its own territory in Europe against enemy attack. It could be argued from this that France, on the eve of this

war, was no longer a great power, and must expect to be treated as a country which requires outside protection. The French, however, do not want to be regarded as charity wards of the Western powers. They know that the British, too, were not prepared to defend Singapore, nor the Americans Pearl Harbor. The French want to play a part in post-war Europe commensurate not with their physical resources—which in terms of manpower, industrial development, and military preparation are admittedly not those of a great power—but with the spiritual influence France has so long and so effectively exercised throughout the world. In the final analysis, perhaps the crux of de Gaulle's controversy with the United States lies right here. Considering himself the trustee of a prostrate country, he refuses to accept on its behalf a role he does not consider worthy of its brilliant past, or of the future he believes it can anticipate. Personal ambition may well be, as some critics claim, the key to his character. But at some points personal ambition becomes inextricably intertwined with his ambitions for France.

**IS THERE A WAY OUT?** If the United States and Britain should decide to recognize the French Committee of National Liberation as the provisional government of France, it would be desirable, in fairness to non-de Gaulleists, to make recognition subject to an Allied guarantee that free elections will be held as soon as practically possible. In view of de Gaulle's intransigence in previous negotiations, however, it is doubtful that he would acquiesce in this condition. Yet only some such guarantee could reassure American officials who fear that the French Committee of Liberation, once recognized as a provisional government, might indiscriminately punish all Frenchmen who, willingly or unwillingly, worked with the Vichy regime. The existing dilemma is made all the more poignant by reports that many of the Frenchmen met by the Allies of Normandy have become prey to political apathy after four years of German rule. It thus seems equally in the interest of de Gaulle, and of Britain and the United States, that an agreement about civilian administration of France should be reached at the earliest possible moment, as the first step toward the country's reconstruction.

VERA MICHELES-DEAN

## WILL U.S. GAINS IN PACIFIC OFFSET JAPANESE DRIVES IN CHINA?

The most impressive aspect of the bombing of Japan by B-29 Superfortresses, the landings on Saipan in the Marianas, and the shooting down of over 300 Japanese planes which attacked our supporting task force in that area on June 18, is that these actions have been executed almost simultaneously with the invasion of western Europe. Our ability to strike effectively in both theatres at the same time is a tribute not only to the

United States armed forces, the American production line, and the war effort of our Allies, but also to the judgment of those top political and military leaders who, in the darkest days, adhered firmly to the strategy of concentrating first of all on the defeat of Germany.

This firmness in the midst of near-disaster lies behind the calm assurance of President Roosevelt's statement of June 12 that, by "carrying out our orig-

inal strategy of eliminating our European enemy first and then turning all our strength to the Pacific, we can force the Japanese to unconditional surrender or to national suicide much more rapidly than has been thought possible." There was, it is worth noting, a long period of a year and a half or more after Pearl Harbor when a different view of strategy was advanced in many quarters—when some military men, members of Congress and average citizens contended that America's real war was the war against Japan. This demand was also backed by the isolationist section of the press, which regarded the "Japan-first" issue as an opportunity for sowing distrust of Britain and Russia and criticising the war policies of the Administration. Today it is only proper to record that the strategy adopted by the high command has proved correct, and that by taking the road to Berlin we have also moved much closer to Tokyo.

**PROGRESS AGAINST JAPAN.** A glance at the details of the military situation in the Pacific reveals that we have now entered the stage of aerial attrition against Japan, and that our position is similar to that we occupied with respect to Germany two years ago. But there is a difference, for even though the June 15 bombings of Japan's largest steel mills at Yawata cannot be expected to lead to daily attacks on the Japanese homeland for some time to come, the general outlook is incomparably more favorable to our side than when we began to launch our aerial offensive against Germany.

The invasion of Saipan on June 14 is our strongest challenge so far to the Japanese Navy, which after long avoiding combat may now come out to fight. Saipan has stiff defenses and, according to preliminary estimates, may contain upwards of two Japanese divisions, but American troops have already captured an airdrome and made important advances. Once the island is in our hands, however, it will furnish a valuable base for air attacks on Japan (Tokyo is 1,465 statute miles distant), and possibly prove a springboard for further incursions into Japanese island outposts. Mindanao in the Philippines lies 1,470 statute miles to the southwest, and Formosa 1,663 statute miles to the northwest. These are great distances, but the United States Navy has a vast range, as indicated by the fact that Saipan is over 1,100 statute miles from Eniwetok in the Marshalls, hitherto our most advanced central Pacific base. We have learned to overcome distances in a far more decisive fashion than ever seemed likely in the days when the virtues of island-hopping were a subject of popular debate.

**CHINA HARD-PRESSED.** The gloomy part of the Far Eastern front is on the Asiatic continent. It is true that the Japanese are being pushed out of India, worn down in northern Burma and driven back by the Chinese in Yunnan, the province of the Burma Road. But in central China the enemy has taken the important economic and communications center of Changsha, according to a Chinese announcement of June 20. It is still too early to say whether the Japanese will be able to retain the city, but the situation is grave. For, as American striking power grows, Tokyo seems determined either to knock China out of the war or to make the use of Chinese territory by the United Nations as difficult as possible. The capture of Changsha may deprive Chungking of vital areas, strengthen Japan's hold on the south China coast where the United States Navy hopes ultimately to effect landings, and cause the loss of advanced American air bases on the central China front.

Yet it is possible to be overly pessimistic, for the situation in China, although serious, must be judged in terms of the war as a whole. Nothing seems more unlikely than that the Chinese armies and their leaders who have kept themselves in the ring on both feet for seven years will give up the fight when victory is in sight. The Chinese know that, however difficult coming months may be, Japan cannot win.

**JAPAN ON THE DEFENSIVE.** Whatever offensives the Japanese may carry through in China, it must be recognized that Tokyo is basically on the defensive. Although there is no justification for complacency on our part, history may well record of Japan—as in previous years of its enemies—that its chief weakness is expressed in the phrase, "too little and too late." The drives that have been launched in China might have brought catastrophe to the United Nations' cause, if they had taken place in the summer of 1942 in a swift follow-up to Tokyo's seizure of southeast Asia. Now, two years later, no such outcome is possible. What is at stake is not victory, but the length of time necessary for the United Nations to achieve it and the condition in which China will emerge from the conflict. These considerations, however, are appreciated in both Washington and London, and it may be expected that Japan will continue to feel the maximum weight we can throw against it.

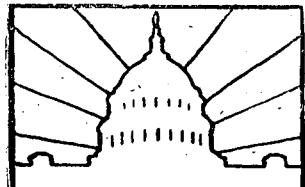
LAWRENCE K. ROSINGER

*Washington Broadcast, by the Man at the Microphone.*  
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Gossip of well-known and less well-known persons.

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# Washington News Letter



## POLISH PREMIER MAKES GOOD IMPRESSION

The Polish government in London is following with special interest the development of Washington's official attitude toward General de Gaulle, for the Poles see a similarity between their differences with the Soviet Union and de Gaulle's differences with the United States. Both Poland and France are counted among the United Nations. Both are battle-fields in the final Allied drive to crush the Nazis. The groups which consider themselves the authorities of Poland and France—the Polish government in London and the French National Committee in Algiers—are not recognized by the nations whose military forces are advancing across territory over which the two groups respectively claim jurisdiction. The Polish government is eager to obtain from the Soviet Union an agreement on civil administration during hostilities, just as the French National Committee is eager to obtain such an agreement from the United States and Britain.

**CONCILIATORY SPIRIT REPORTED.** The prospect for the Poles is not bright, although the nine-day visit here of Polish Prime Minister Stanislaw Mikolajczyk brought his government and the Washington Administration into closer harmony. On the one hand, the scrupulous attention the White House and the State Department paid to the protocol demands of the visit—in tendering the Prime Minister a state dinner and granting him long audiences with our highest officials—pleased the Poles and may impress the Russians. On the other hand, the reasonableness Mikolajczyk displayed concerning the difficult problems involved in re-establishing diplomatic relations between his government and Russia pleased Washington.

The Prime Minister correctly understood that the United States will not jeopardize its relations with Russia by a split over the Polish question, and he accepted that attitude. The decision about Poland's future lies with Russia.

The Russian-Polish controversy hinges on the question of sovereign relations between states rather than on specific boundary questions. The Russians—who are said to have been impressed by the support the Polish underground gives the exiled government—are reported willing to reach a compromise about their proposal of January 11, 1944 for a boundary drawn on the basis of the Curzon Line; and willing also to permit Poland to retain the city of Lwow and the oil and potash fields southeast of that city. Premier Mikolajczyk made it plain during his visit

here that the Polish government in London desires the annexation of East Prussia and Upper Silesia.

The Russians have already indicated, in their statement of January 11, 1944,\* that they favor giving East Prussia and Upper Silesia to Poland. The chief issue at stake between the Russians and the Poles is that Moscow disapproves of some Polish officials, notably Minister of National Defense Kukiel, who was responsible for the accusation of April 16, 1943 that Russians had murdered Poles at Katyn; Minister of Information Kot, who was Polish ambassador to Russia in 1941; and General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, the Polish commander-in-chief. The Poles, for their part, feel that Moscow's open disapproval of these officials constitutes interference in their affairs. The Polish Cabinet, meanwhile, has yet to act on a resolution submitted by the National Council in London on May 17, 1944, barring Sosnkowski from succeeding to the presidency. Mikolajczyk, on his return, may seek a purge of the Polish government, but it would be easier for him if his action could appear as voluntary, and not as taken under Russian pressure.

**PROBLEM OF THE UNDERGROUND.** Mikolajczyk himself is *persona grata* with Moscow, according to Oscar Lange, University of Chicago professor, who visited the U.S.S.R. with Father Orlmanski. Lange sought and obtained a conference with Mikolajczyk while the Prime Minister was here. Mikolajczyk, who comes from Poznan, in western Poland, lacks the deep-rooted distaste for Russia felt by eastern Poles, who recall the days when the Russians were their masters.

For Mikolajczyk, the part the underground is to play in coming events overshadows every other consideration, including the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Russia. A "General Tabor" of the underground arrived here from Poland almost simultaneously with Mikolajczyk, and conferred with Admiral William D. Leahy, the President's chief of staff, and other high military officials about the possibility of arming the Polish forces in Poland. But the status of the underground, like the future of diplomatic relations, is a matter for Russian, not American, determination. The Washington Administration can do no more than hope that the Russian and Polish governments will find a basis for cooperation.

BLAIR BOLLES

\*See "Russia Proposes Polish Border Settlement," *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, January 14, 1944.

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